United Nations A/62/771

General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 March 2008

Original: English

Sixty-second session
Agenda item 113 (d)
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 14 March 2008 from the Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Ghana to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session and has the honour to inform him that the Government of Ghana has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2008-2011 in the elections to be held in May 2008, during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, in New York.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, an aide-memoire on Ghana's achievements, voluntary pledges and commitments towards the universal promotion and protection of human rights is attached (see annex).

08-28894 (E) 020408

Annex to the note verbale dated 14 March 2008 from the Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Aide-memoire

Voluntary pledges and commitments of Ghana in accordance with resolution 60/251

Ghana's Membership of the Human Rights Council

- Ghana has since the formation of the Human Rights Council participated actively in its debates and participated in other activities of the Council, thereby contributed effectively to the Councils collaborative effort to build the consensus necessary for the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.

- Ghana has pursued a consistent policy of non-politicisation of the work of the Council, and worked to ensure objectivity in the Councils debates and decisions. Consequently, she has consistently urged the Council to focus on the enhancement of international cooperation for the promotion and protection of human rights.

- As a member of the Council, she has articulated and pursued the interests of victims of human rights abuses around the world. Through active participation, she has also followed a policy of cooperation and engagement even during periods of disagreement to ensure decisions in favour of human rights promotion.

International commitments

- Ghana was among the first members of the African Union to subscribe to the African Peer Review Mechanism to be peer reviewed. In the same vein, it welcomed the system of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council and stands ready to be reviewed in May 2008 during the second session of the first cycle of the UPR.

- Ghana fully cooperates with human rights treaty bodies by duly submitting its periodic reports and endeavour to implement their concluding observations and recommendations.

- In cooperation with the United Nations Special Procedures, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes and Consequences, Ms. Yakin Erturk, undertook a mission to Ghana from 7 to 14 July, 2007 and enjoyed the invaluable support and cooperation of the competent Ghanaian authorities and civil society organizations.

Ghana is party to key international human rights instruments including:

- **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**
- **Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**
- **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**
- **International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families**
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child**
- **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**

Ghana has also signed the following:

- **Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance**
- **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**
- **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**
- **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**
- **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on children in armed conflict**
- **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography**

- In March 2007, Ghana was one of the first countries to sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which is a clear demonstration of its solidarity and belief in a life with dignity for all and that all human beings are equal. The competent Ghanaian authorities are working to facilitate domestic procedures for ratifying the Convention as early as possible. Moreover, domestic laws related to the disabled have been revised to fall in line with the newly adopted Convention.

- Ghana is also party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II) and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Convention on the

Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity.

- Ghana is a party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and to the Protocol Establishing the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

- Measures are being taken at the national level to ratify or accede to all international human rights instruments to which Ghana is not yet party.

- Ghana's commitment to the tenets of democracy, human rights and the rule of law and good governance have carved for her the image of a highly democratic African country. It has fulfilled its obligations in respect of international human rights and humanitarian law and has over the last decade worked closely with the UNHCR to offer a home away from home for refugees in the West Africa sub-region.

Human rights at home

- The Government of Ghana is fully committed to the promotion and protection of human rights. In consonance with that commitment, Ghana has made an open-ended provision in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana in Article 33(5) of Chapter 5 on fundamental human rights and freedom as follows:

> *The rights, duties, declarations and guarantees relating to the fundamental human rights and freedoms specifically mentioned in this chapter shall not be regarded as excluding others not specifically mentioned which are considered to be inherent in a democracy and intended to secure the freedom and dignity of man.*

- The Constitution of Ghana also guarantees respect for the economic, cultural and social rights of her citizens. In this spirit, Ghana has implemented extensive legislation provisions that protect human rights in an open and democratic political culture.

- A conducive environment that does not tolerate violations of the rights of all Ghanaians has been created. The Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, a constitutional body monitoring human rights and dealing with violations and educating the public on human rights, is in place.

- As an eloquent manifestation of our commitment to and the protection of children and gender balance, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs with Cabinet status continues to pursue various programmes and projects for women's empowerment and gender equality and child rights.

- Ghana is committed and responding to the calls to implement the Declarations and Plans of Action towards Africa Fit for Children and the World Fit for Children. An Early Childhood Development/HIV/AIDS as well as Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) policies have been developed and community based organizations (CBOs) working on HIV/AIDS have been trained and equipped with skills to respond to the special needs of children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

- Annual national campaigns on integrated child health comprising immunization, distribution of free insecticide treated bed nets and Vitamin 'A' supplementation have been institutionalized and no child in Ghana has died from measles disease in the last four years and we are on course to be certified as a polio free country.

- Having conducted a research into violence against children, Ghana has started the process towards developing a National Plan of Action on violence against children. On this note, Ghana fully supports the General Assembly's decision in December 2007 appointment of a Special Representative on violence against children, for a period of three years, to act as a high-profile and independent global advocate for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children.

- Ghana enacted legislation against Human Trafficking in 2005 and has developed a comprehensive National Plan of Action to implement the legislation. A cross sectoral Human Trafficking Management Board and a Human Trafficking Fund have been established to facilitate execution. In addition, Ghana has entered into multilateral and bilateral cooperation agreements with neighbouring countries to effectively combat trafficking in persons especially children across our borders.

- The Government of Ghana recognizes the threat that violence against women poses to women's empowerment, and thus, for many years, has exhibited strong political will and enacted laws that are needed to truly end such atrocities and ensure equal rights for women in all aspects of life.

- Several pieces of legislation are in place to prohibit negative cultural practices which impede the development of women such as ritual servitude and FGM, harmful widowhood rites, early marriages, violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, discriminatory food allocations and taboos and practices relating to health and well being of women and children.

- Domestic Violence and Victim Support Units (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service have been established throughout the country to promote protection of women and children from domestic violence, abuse and neglect. The Units activities have brought into scrutiny some pertinent issues in both the domestic setting and the workplace.

- To provide the requisite legal framework for the activities of DOVVSU, the Parliament of Ghana in February, 2007, passed the Domestic Violence Act 2007, (Act 732) marking yet another milestone in our commitment to human rights and specifically the rights of women. The Government now is developing a comprehensive National Domestic Violence Action Plan to ensure its implementation.

- Further legislative reforms to ensure equal rights between women and men culminated in the enactment of a law on the property rights of spouses that give both spouses equal access to property acquired during marriage in situations of divorce or separation.

- Ghana fosters an environment that allows space for and encourages the work of human rights defenders and journalists for human rights.

- Ghana has over the last decade worked closely with UNHCR to serve as an oasis of peace, security and stability for refugees in the West Africa sub-region and fulfilled its obligations in respect of international human rights and humanitarian law.

- Ghana has also provided training on the prevention of violence and response to sexual and gender based violence to the refugee community, police personnel and members of the neighbourhood watch teams under the auspices of the UNHCR programme.

- Additionally, police and military institutions and Women Constituencies are engaging to develop Ghana's Plan of Action on implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security.

Ghana and human rights in the future

The Government of the Republic of Ghana reiterates its longstanding resolve that human rights should be approached in a dialogue-based and constructive manner and voluntarily commits itself to the following:

- **to continue to participate actively in the work of the Human Rights Council;**
- **to continue to strengthen policies for the advancement of women to eliminate laws that continue to discriminate against women;**
- **reiterates its commitments to the survival, development, protection, of children in issues that affect their well being and above all in their best interest;**
- **to maintain a standing invitation to all United Nations Special Procedures;**

- **to continue to cooperate fully with UN human rights treaty bodies and promptly submit its periodic reports to treaty bodies;**
- **to remain committed to strengthening the Council to enable it achieve its aims and objectives.**

NEW YORK, 10 MARCH, 2008